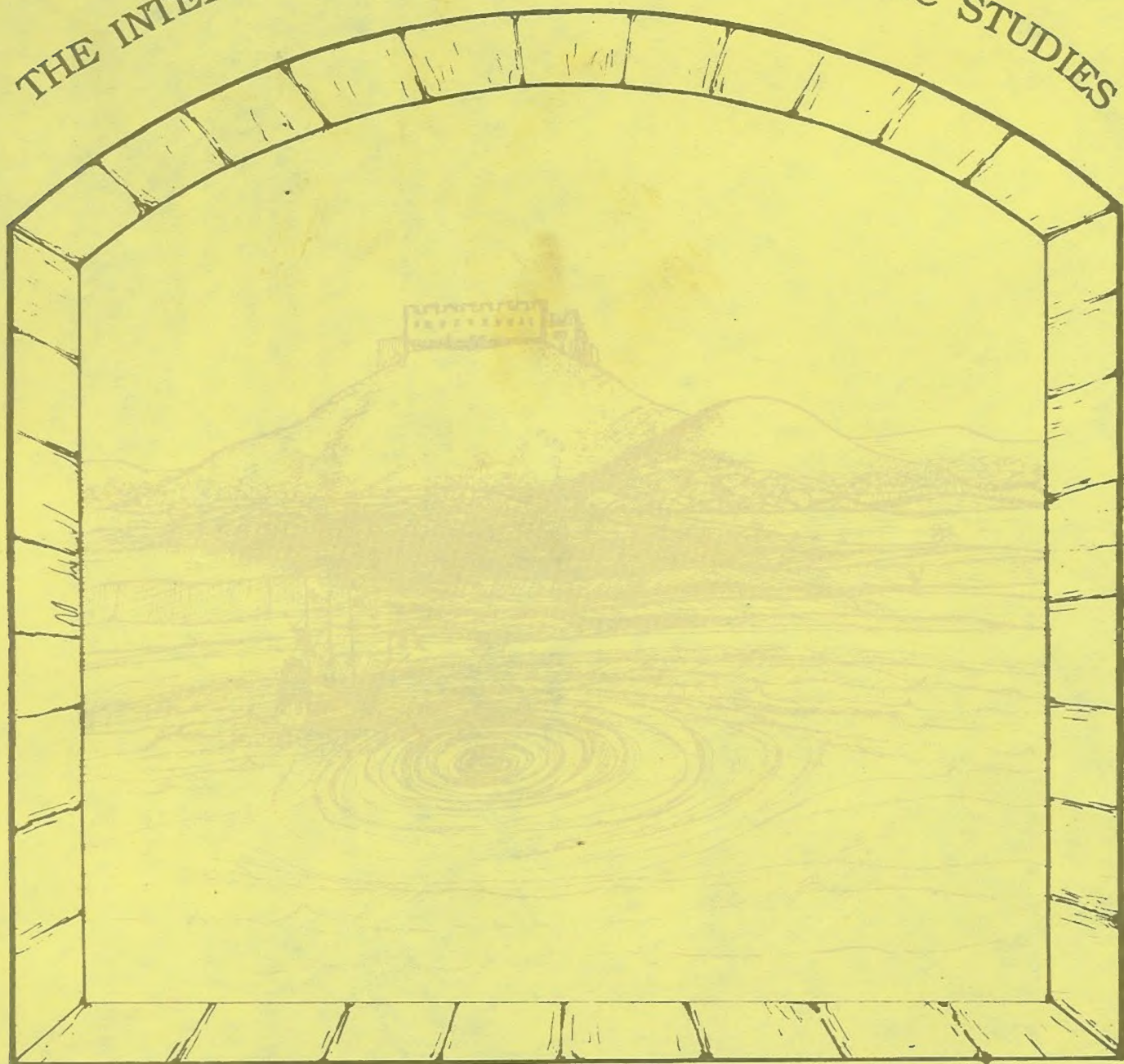


THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF ESOTERIC STUDIES



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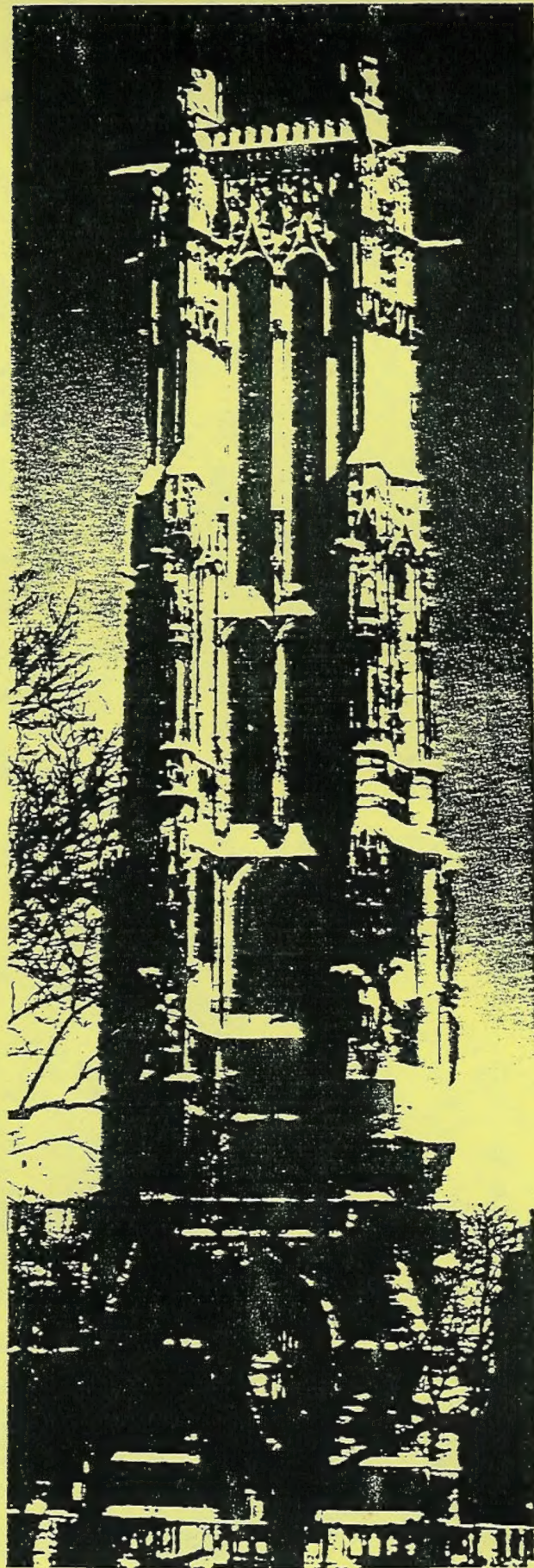
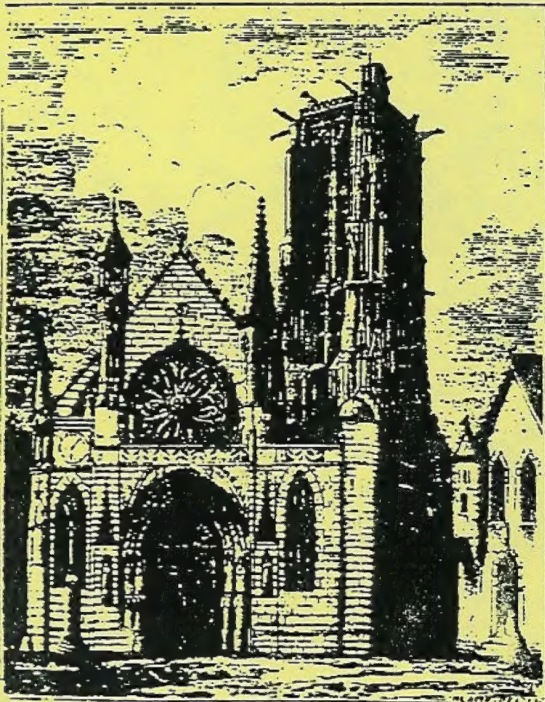
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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

Nicolas Flamel (1330–1417), Parisian alchemist, was buried in the church of Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie (*below*), near which he lived and worked. At the end of the eighteenth century the church was demolished, but the tower (*right*) is still standing; it is now a meteorological station. Flamel's tombstone can be seen in the Musée de Cluny in Paris



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#217

Beloved and Respected Companions!

THE ESOTERIC TRADITION AND THE TEMPLE

The Alchemists

The word alchemy is derived from a combination of Arabic and Greek words. It originally meant the "Egyptian Art." This relates to processes which, it is believed, were used by the Egyptians to transform the nature of certain metals. In antiquity, Egypt was called "Al Kemit" or the black one. Alchemy was said to have been first taught in Egypt by Hermes Trismegistus, a legendary Egyptian legislator, priest and philosopher who supposedly lived in the reign of Ninus about 2000 BC. So closely has legend associated Hermes with alchemy that the latter also became known as the Hermetic Art. The legacy of Hermes was in fact the teaching of Egyptian and Greek initiates belonging to esoteric circles in and around Alexandria. These initiates found it convenient to use terms and language employed by metallurgists and certain other artisans of the time in order to keep their teaching and mystical experiences secret. One such set of writings which has come down to us from antiquity is said to have been written by Hermes himself on an emerald tablet. Included in this text was the famous axiom of Hermes "As above, so below."

DEVELOPMENT OF ALCHEMY & CHEMISTRY

During the early part of the Christian era the Neo-Platonists became interested in the subject and introduced it as a new science -- it was about this time that people began to call it alchemy. Around the eighth century, the Moslems became interested in the subject, but since they were not sympathetic to any spiritual system outside Islam, they confined themselves to the purely chemical side of the new science. For example, under the stimulus of Djahir Ibn Hayyan of Baghdad, a veritable scientific school arose which made important discoveries and established what was eventually to become the basis for Western chemistry. The conquest of southern Spain by the Moors brought alchemy to Europe. It is believed that Italian monks were the first to translate Arab manuscripts into Latin. It is also recorded that in 1144 the English monk, Robert of Chester, translated an Arab work on alchemy.

In Europe, in some cases spurred on by greed, many researchers plunged themselves into ancient alchemical texts, trying to transmute the base metals of tin, lead, copper and iron into silver and gold. Many quacks and charlatans also claimed to have discovered secret formulae for producing an elixir of everlasting life, or gold, thus adding their wild and dishonest imaginings to an already obscure alchemical literature.

NICHOLAS FLAMEL In those exciting times, a legend developed about an alchemist named Nicholas Flamel, who many believed had found the secret. According to legend, Flamel worked for many years without success. One day he discovered an old manuscript containing alchemical symbols which was signed "Abraham the Jew." Flamel invested more years of effort with the help of his wife, a former widow, subsequently known in alchemical history as the "Widow Pernelle," trying to decipher the manuscript. Feeling discouraged, he decided to make the traditional pilgrimage to the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela, legendary burial place of the Apostle St. James the Martyr, the patron saint of alchemists, taking the manuscript with him. Passing through the city of León he met a mysterious Jew who confided to him the secret of the manuscript. From then on Flamel became very rich, to the extent of granting money to charitable institutions, and contributing to the re-construction of the Church of St. Jacques-de-Boucherie. Since then no one has ever been able to disprove the story, or offer a satisfactory explanation as to how Flamel came by his fortune.

Alchemy's boom years, in terms of academic interest and experimentation, were between 1550 and 1650, after which it gradually fell into disrepute because no one managed to demonstrate that the formulae or methods contained in all the different writings on the subject really worked. Despite this, alchemy has continued to fascinate a certain kind of mind, even today, and over the centuries many eminent personalities from all walks of life have been drawn to the Hermetic Art. Paracelsus, Albertus Magnus, Raymund Lull, Roger Bacon, Giordano Bruno, St. Thomas Aquinas, Sir Isaac Newton and Elias Ashmole, one of the fathers of modern Freemasonry, are said to have been practitioners.

PARACELSUS Paracelsus, famous for his contribution to medicine, is also known as the author of a treatise on alchemy entitled "The Great Mysteries" which was to influence generations of alchemists. Paracelsus was both a medical doctor and metallurgist and tried to apply alchemical methods to medicine. He is considered to be one of the fathers of homeopathy and was among the first to use the experimental and observational approach to curing disease.

While some of the great minds following in the footsteps of the early Arab researchers have studied alchemy purely from a material point of view, others realized that the

purpose of those who developed the process was to provide potential initiates with certain keys which could unlock a secret psycho-spiritual system capable of guiding the persistent practitioner to the summit of spiritual illumination and union with the Divine. These keys are still used today among initiates attracted to this approach. In France, for example, there are a few practicing alchemists in the classic mold who are highly respected in esoteric circles. Two of these, personally known to me, are living proofs that true alchemy, practiced by those who know, really works.

JUNG Jung, the great Swiss psychoanalyst, has confirmed through practical work on himself and his patients the authentic meaning of alchemy. From his writings, it does not appear that Jung's research took him to the final stage of the alchemical process. He seems to have completed what in alchemy is described as the "Work in the White" after the "Work in the Black". Jung called this the "Individualization of the Personality."

The final step in alchemy is the "Work in the Red," and when this has been carried out successfully one is said to have completed the "Great Work". This is spiritual illumination, the realization of Unity, the acquisition of the Philosopher's Stone. The main obstacle to reaching the summit of the Art is that, as in any other spiritual system, in the final stages of the path the pilgrim has to commit himself totally, sustained only by absolute confidence in the Divine within. It is not recorded how far Jung and his successors approached this final step.

Because of the incredible hotchpotch of influences and deliberate efforts by initiates to conceal the keys to the true techniques, it is virtually impossible to explain in a short summary what alchemy really is, but I will try to sum it up:

THE GOAL OF ALCHEMY Like many other approaches dealing with spiritual development, alchemy is really about the nature of transcendental unity and man's urge to integrate himself in it. Aware of the famous axiom of Hermes, or Thoth as he was called in Egypt, the alchemist tries to reproduce in the "philosophical egg" or crucible the same process which gave birth to the world. He does this by attracting Divine grace and then identifying himself with God, after which he proceeds to work in the same way as the Cosmos was created by organizing the primeval chaos. Although he employs material manipulations to realize his objectives, the goal of the true alchemist is above all -- **spiritual.**

The alchemist believes that if he manages to achieve perfection in his art, he will also be transformed in the process, hence the great stress place in alchemy on the purity of soul and perfection in the application of all the techniques involved in the process.

The alchemist believed that Man had a spirit, an individual soul and a material body. The spirit, which was part of the Universal Spirit, belonged to the Divine world. This spark of the spirit became imprisoned in matter at the time of Man's original fall. In alchemical terminology the body corresponds to salt, the soul to sulphur, and the spirit to mercury, and these three aspects also represent the three universal forces of the Trinity.

The three universal forces operate through seven channels, symbolized by the seven planets. There are seven base metals which correspond to the planets. The Sun corresponds to gold; the Moon to silver; Mercury to mercury; Venus to copper; Mars to iron; Jupiter to tin; and Saturn to lead. The world of matter is divided into four elements: Fire, Air, Earth and Water.

THE EFFECT OF PERFECTION In perfecting and redeeming himself, Man also helps the world of Nature to ascend. The Divine has given Man the means whereby he can achieve both spiritual and material perfection. Man is thus able not only to transmute metals; he is also given the means of combating disease and mortality. There is thus an inner alchemy concerned with the perfection of the soul and an outer which concerns the perfection of matter and the body. Accordingly the quest is oriented in two complimentary directions. One is the search for the Universal Medicine or Elixir of Long Life. The other is to complete the purification process known as the transmutation of base metals.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE The Elixir can only be made after the Philosopher's Stone has been obtained. The Stone, which resembles a ruby, is crushed to a powder, liquefied and then drunk. According to alchemical lore, the practitioner will be regenerated by this concoction and will be able to live to the age of 144 without suffering from illness of any kind.

The idea underlying the transmutation of metals is that metals are living things, and if they are purified to a maximum they will inevitably take the form of gold which is the noblest of all metals. Similarly as the practitioner purifies himself through the frustrations and difficulties encountered in manipulating his alchemical materials, he will reach a certain level of purification in the "Great Work" which will allow him to be restored to Man's original state of purity, i.e. to realize the transmutation of gold within himself. In alchemical jargon he will have discovered the Philosopher's Stone, transcended time and space by dissolving all that is putrescible in his body and being, and coagulating the Divine within him to become one of the elect.

At the end of the process, the two directions of the quest will coalesce. Since both directions are but two sides of the same thing, the outer will become a manifestation of the

inner, and the realization of the inner will be facilitated by the perfect execution of the outer. Thus while the principle occupation of the true alchemist is not the search for material gold, the process when realized will make the acquisition of gold accessible to him.

THE PROCESSES Theoretically the alchemist has a choice of three levels of intensity in the speed at which he carries out the quest for the Philosopher's Stone. These are the Wet Process, the Dry Process and the Short Process.

The Wet Process is the most common and is effected by allowing a gradual ripening of the **Materia Prima** or First Matter. The very first alchemical operation is to free the base metal selected as the material for the whole process from its inessential characteristics. When this is done the material becomes the **Materia Prima**. This is then kept in a transparent flask and heated in the **athanor** or alchemical oven, passing through four different phases described successively as Black or Raven, White or Dove, Iridescent or Peacock, Red or Rubification. The Wet Process, if correctly done, will take 40 days.

Information on the Dry Process is only given by word of mouth. It is known however that it is extremely difficult, and a number of alchemists are said to have died attempting it. The Dry Process is also called the Sacerdotal or Path of the Humble. It is said to take three days. The Short Process takes a few hours or even a few seconds. However, only the very great initiates can accomplish it.

In spiritual terms, the work in the Black or Raven is the descent into the depths of one's being, where one sees both the impure as well as the nobler aspects of oneself. By working on his weaknesses the practitioner masters his lower impulses. In other words by a process of distillation he removes the dross from his basic metals to obtain the **Materia Prima**. This process is also described as capturing and taming the Black Raven. When this operation is successful a quality called the Green Lion followed by another known as the Red Lion will manifest.

In the next stage, the material will develop a white colour which is the philosophical mercury, the mercury of the wise or the Virgin Milk drawn from the May-dew. The final stage is of course the Red stage or Rubification which will bring the desired perfection.

The conditions required for the Great Work are, *inter alia*, solitude, silence, patience, perseverance and discretion. Account also needs to be taken of astrological conditions, and the rules concerning the different stages to be followed in practicing the art must be strictly adhered to.

Certain alchemical symbols and ideas form part of the Templar Tradition, which is only natural since many Templars were secret alchemists.

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#218

Beloved Companions

We are happy to be able to share with you the following anecdote about Papus:

An anecdote about Papus

Translated from L'Initiation.

While reading the very interesting article dedicated to Paracelsus, which appeared in the last issue of L'Initiation for 1953, the following sentence caught my attention:

"He (Paracelsus) has searched for the Philosopher's Stone. Most probably he has not been more successful than they (the alchemists) in transforming lead into gold" ... (page 305).

This reminded me of the following anecdote:

As I left one of the courses that Doctor Papus was giving a certain evening at the Hermetic School, rue Segulier, we had followed him to the cafe de l'Horloge at the corner of the bank and Place Saint-Michel.

While chatting with him, I remarked on the superb gold charm which adorned his watch chain. I complemented him on it. With his customary simplicity he allowed me to examine it, then asked:

"Do you know this metal?"

"It is gold."

"No, it is lead."

I opened my eyes wide. - - "Lead?"

"If you prefer, lead transmuted into gold. Alchemical gold."

And he continued:

"It is quite a story. One day, Guaita came to find me. He had bought a very old book about alchemy on the banks. As the back part was in a bad state, my Guaita, a fervent book lover, undertook to repair it. In the course of this operation he discovered a sachet of parchment concealed in the back of the book. He opens it and finds a red powder inside. It is then that he came to see me, bringing his discovery.

"What is that?" said he. "Could it be the Philosopher's Stone?" "What do you think of it?"

I was as embarrassed as he. The origin of this powder so well hidden in a book on alchemy, its appearance so perfectly fitting what the old alchemists have written about it, had evidently led me to think that Guaita himself was not mistaken in supposing that we had some of the Stone in our hands.

Finally, I told him to make sure that there was only the experiment to carry out. "Let us see what your book says about the way to transmute lead into gold when one possesses the Stone. We will follow the instructions meticulously and we will attempt the transmutation." That is what we did.

We wrap the powder in a small ball of wax, in a crucible we melt down a small piece of lead pipe of a weight corresponding to the powder we had, and into this liquefied metal, we throw the small ball of wax.

Scarcely had it touched the melted metal than a green glimmer produced itself in the crucible, lasting a fraction of a second, dazzling like a flash of lightning, illuminating the whole room. And we noted that the metal solidified instantly into a yellow mass.

The crucible cooled, we break it to extract the ingot.

It quite had the appearance of gold. It was sent to "la Monnare" for testing and was returned to us with certification that it was a gold ingot. After sharing it, we had it transformed into charms and this is one of them which decorates my chain.

He added laughing: "That is how I made gold once in my life. Unfortunately I would not know how to do it again!"

DACE

(Related by "Dace," pseudonym of the late Paul Schmid [one of Papus' most faithful companions] who departed for the Eternal Orient on April 22, 1960 at an age of 81. I salute his memory here. Phillipe Encausse.

* * *

The Freemasons

We have already presented two papers on Freemasonry as it relates to the Esoteric Tradition and the Temple and of course there is the on-going series being presented in each Liber.

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Compagnonage was the name given in France to certain guilds with mystical associations, formed between workmen in the building trade to promote their mutual interests. The basis of each guild was called the *Devoir* or duty. The *Devoir* was the collection of rules, work practices, traditions and rites of the craft. The essence of Compagnonage was to promote a workmen's elite which would bring a deeper dimension to manual work through the attitude that there was much more to the practice of a craft than earning a living.

Although virtually no mention of Compagnonage has been found in public documents of the early Middle Ages, it can be traced back to at least the twelfth century. At that time it came to public notice in the form of associations founded to protect workmen during their travels, and to provide friendly contact for members arriving in strange towns. One of the earliest official references to them is in 1420, in an ordinance during the reign of Charles VI.

There were three main associations deriving from three traditions:

The Children of Solomon
The Children of Master Jacques
The Children of Father Soubise

The Children of Solomon claimed that Solomon gave them their *Devoir* as a reward for their work during the building of the Temple, and that he had united them in a Brotherhood. The Children of Master Jacques traced their origins to one of the Master Builders who was a colleague of Hiram Abiff, the great builder sent to King Solomon by Hiram, King of Tyre, to supervise the building of the temple. Father Soubise, the legend goes, was a colleague of Master Jacques, and after the temple was completed they travelled together to Gaul, swearing that they would never part. Their association did not last because of rivalry, and Master Jacques was murdered by certain disciples of Father Soubise who himself denied any involvement. Another legend claims that Master Jacques was in reality Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar.

Within each of the three associations there was a system of initiations and degrees with secret signs, passwords and decorations. At least during the time of the Templars, there was also a system of secret instruction. The art of building and the esoteric knowledge associated with it were passed on only by word of mouth. The first stage of membership was that of Apprentice, which lasted about five years before arriving at the stage of *Mâîtrise* or Mastership. As soon as a craftsman finished his apprenticeship he joined one of the three associations and

commenced an obligatory journey through France, known in the tradition as the **Tour de France**.

The Compagnon survived during the Tour by working as he went. In each town there was a "House" of the association presided over by a woman called the "Mother." Meetings were held in the House, officers were elected and food and lodging offered there to travelling members.

STRICT RULES There were very strict rules concerning communal life, such as respect for the elders of the craft, for the Mother of the House, and for all Compagnons regardless of religion, race or political opinions. At table in the communal House, all conversation which could lead to discord was forbidden. Anyone who did not respect this rule was subject to a fine which was adjusted according to the importance of the fault. Before sitting at table the Compagnons had to satisfy the Mother that they were suitably dressed. They also had to ask permission to leave the table and were liable to fines if they were late for supper.

The Compagnons had many quaint customs, practices and dress. They also developed a vocabulary of their own. The word **coterie** for example was a generic term used to designate a given **devoir**, the different functions performed or the grade reached within a trade. A "Dog" was a compagnon who had completed his **Tour de France**, "Fox" was an aspirant, and a "Monkey" was a Master Craftsman.

THE TEMPLAR/COMPAGNON CONNECTION I have already suggested how the mutual influences of the Templars and the Compagnons might have acted and reacted on each other. For example, the Templars certainly deepened the spiritual dimension of the artisans' contact with forms and materials. The Compagnons provided the constructions to be ensouled by the laws and spiritual principles taught and practiced by the Templars.

Compagnonage has had to adapt itself to a variety of historical circumstances. The movement was persecuted from the fall of the Templars all the way down to the nineteenth century. Ironically, the Renaissance did not work in its favor since one of its legacies was the introduction of the speculative element in artistic creation, whereby the artist imposed his own inspiration and assigned a secondary role to the purely manual aspect of the work. The public became interested only in the artist who conceived a building or a sculpture and not in the artisans who carried out the basic physical work.

HARD TIMES The sixteenth century Reformation, the democratic ideals of the French Revolution of 1789 and the popular movements of the 1800's were also not conducive to the Compagnon's way of life. In the industrial era, although there has been no persecution of Compagnonage, the by-products of

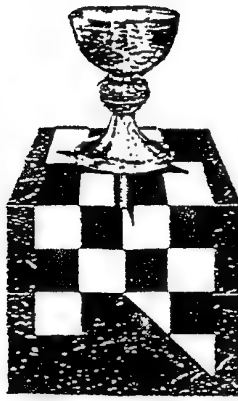
socialism and trade-unionism have not helped it either. Although Compagnonage was not attached to any particular religion, it was religious in the sense that it did not consider man a purely economic being, but a composite unit linked to a universe with which he sought harmony through the search for form. This approach was not very popular in the rising materialism of the late nineteenth century. All these external pressures were bound to react unfavourably on the internal unity of the Compagnon movement. From the sixteenth century onwards the movement began to break up and all kinds of dissension arose.

During the Reformation a split developed. They were the **Gavots** who followed the reformers, and the **Devorants** who stayed faithful to the Catholic Church. Problems on the building site of Orleans Cathedral brought matters to a head and created what was subsequently called the Schism of Orleans. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 accelerated the division and decline of the movement and many Compagnons who were Protestants emigrated to Germany, Switzerland and other countries. Even the traditional **Tour de France** was banned by Louis XIV.

In 1793 some of those Compagnons who belonged to the Devoir of Father Soubise decided to drop all religious elements from the association, an action which resulted in the formation of a new Devoir called the devoir of Liberty. The nineteenth century was a particularly agitated time within what remained of Compagnonage. After several failures the Compagnon Union was set up in 1889, bringing together the different groupings. This did not last and the Union disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century.

In France today, Compagnonage operates principally within the framework of the Workers Association of the Compagnons of Duty, the Compagnon Federation of Building Trades and an earlier version of the Compagnon Union which had been founded in 1875, and was later temporarily incorporated into the Union just referred to. In recent years there have been glimmerings of interest in Europe, especially in West Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, amongst the younger generation who are attracted to the idea of becoming master craftsmen of a trade. Regrettably, there may no longer be enough true masters of the crafts capable of transmitting the spiritual tradition which inspired the original Compagnons.

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#221

Beloved Companions and Seekers of the Grail!

THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

Lecture Five : Perceval

Perceval, a knight introduced by Chretien de Troyes in his Conte del Graal (written about 1180), was the first hero of the Grail stories and under various names (Peredur, Parzifal, Parsifal, Perchevael) he remained at the center of the stories which followed and, for long, captured the imagination of Europe. Nonetheless he was an unlikely hero. As a boy, the story begins, Perceval is sheltered by his mother from all knowledge of the world of knightly chivalry, for she feared that knighthood would bring his death as it had his father's. However, one day Perceval sees a party of knights and, enchanted by the romance of knighthood and with no thought of his mother's grief, he leaves for King Arthur's court. After various adventures the young, and still very naive, knight comes to the castle of the Grail and, at dinner, witnesses a procession bearing the Grail and its related holy things. He remains in awed silence only to discover later that if he had instead asked a question the Fisher King might have been healed and the lands of the Grail renewed.

It is only after many further adventures that Perceval again, and finally, achieves the Grail Quest, which involves for him the asking of a question, and becomes himself the Guardian of the Grail.

This in brief is the story of Perceval's Quest. We shall consider in the following lecture the stories which center on Galahad and, even reduced to this minimum, the material is very complex. Let us separate it into four headings which I shall call: the Divine Fool, the question, the alchemical Perceval, and "why Perceval"?

The Divine Fool

As in the Tarot the Fool (who, whether designated 'aleph', as beginning; or 'shin' in connection with the mystery of love, is the point around which the dance of the arcana turns) signifies that foolishness of God which, as St. Paul said, is wiser than

the wisdom of men, so Perceval is one of those characters who reflects the mystery of wise folly. This is most explicit in Wagner's Parsifal where, for example, the Fisher King is told:

"By pity enlightened
The guileless Fool—
Wait for him,
My chosen tool."

And this is implicit in the character of Perceval from the beginning. Now, esotericists like to identify correspondences in a neat and exact way, but before identifying Perceval with the Fool of the Tarot, there is a distinction that needs to be made. The Fool, while he may appear balanced over a precipice, never loses his perfect equilibrium. Perceval however, albeit in naive innocence, performs many rash acts with unfortunate and even tragic consequences. His impulsive departure leaves his mother to die shortly afterwards of grief, and his unasked question leaves the king and his lands in their suffering. We may say the same of Don Quixote, that other figure so close to the archetypal Fool, that in misunderstanding so many things he causes sorrow and constantly loses his equilibrium if in the end — for the reader — he brings liberation and understanding. Under our final heading we will pursue the significance of Perceval's folly a bit further, but for now let us say first that Perceval is not identical to the Fool, but, secondly, that he stands — like Don Quixote — in a profound relation to the Fool.



The Question

What is the question which Perceval needs to ask so that the Fisher King may be healed? In Cretien it is as to the meaning of the Grail procession, and similarly in the Peredur. On the other hand in the Perlesvaus it is as to who is served by the Grail. In the Parzival the healing question is: "What aileth thee, my uncle?" Now considered, as it were, exoterically, we may say that the essential idea was that a question was needed and each author felt free to provide his own specific. Various esoteric interpretations may, no doubt, be offered, but when we consider that (as we shall develop later) no question was necessary at the highest level of the Quest, that of Galahad, it is not so much in relation to the Grail that a question is necessary but rather is necessary for *Perceval himself* to question — in one way or another — the meaning of the visible reality, to get beyond the surfaces through which, as a 'naif', he naturally experienced in the world. *The question is for the sake*

of the quester, not for the sake of the Grail.

On a philosophic level, Simone Weil has remarked that there is a profound insight in Von Eschenbach's insistence, in the Parzival, that the nature of the illness be asked. Each of us awaits that question of profound compassion in relation to our own experience, in effect "how does it feel to be you?", which will free us from the burden of our solitude. Or as Von Eschenbach:

"When unconsoled the Fisher sat,
So sorrowful and full of grief,
Why would you not give him relief?"

The Alchemical Perceval

Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival also contains a great deal of complex symbolism, much of it apparently alchemical. First of all the Grail itself is described as "...a stone of purest kind, called lapis exilis." Which parallels-

"This insignificant stone (lapis exilis)...
is despised by fools, the more cherished by the wise."
Rosarium Philosophorum Arnold of Villanova

In addition the alchemical triad of black, white and red is reflected in many places and, indeed, Parzival is reconciled at the end to a half-brother, Feirefiz, who is parti-coloured black and white. There is a wealth of other symbolism which will interest, and more or less reward, the esotericist. Perhaps particularly striking is (in von Eschenbach's poem The Hound Gardevias) a hound's collar written with starry script and a leash twelve meters long of interwoven strands of yellow, green, red and brown. The Parzival was the central text, we might add, for the Grail meditations of Rudolph Steiner and also for Walter Stein and Trevor Ravenscroft, whose books are the most available expression of this school in English. Characteristic of this school is a very complex and detailed conception of the relation of the Grail, and the Blood of Christ, to the "inner history" of Europe. In general one senses an attempt to concretize and make graspable and definable something: "inner history", which is too subtle for such treatment, and also a certain blurred sense of reality, of what is fact and what is fancy. Which is by no means to deny the value of their work. Ravenscroft's Cup of Destiny, in particular, we recommend as a valuable companion to the reading of the Parzival, which in turn we recommend for its wealth of symbols.

Why Perceval?

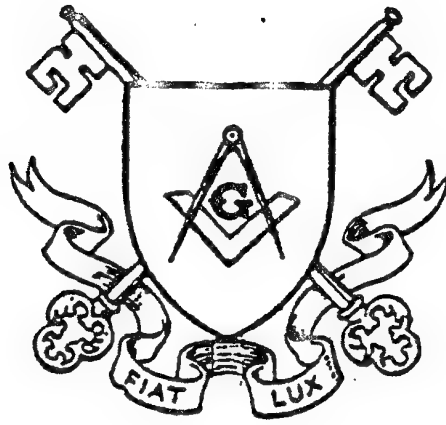
Finally, moving from a literary to a spiritual point of view, we must ask ourselves why the first image of a Grail hero is that of a sort of innocent, who reminds us of the Fool, who must learn to question reality. Perhaps the answer is related to the necessity, in the spiritual life, to return to simplicity as a starting point. Jesus taught that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven one must first become as a little child. Zen Buddhists are given, for contemplation, the question "what was your face before you were born?" The problem is that as time goes on we become not so much one simple person, but a crowd of people who daily take the stage in turn. Somehow we cannot be all ourselves at once. No writer, perhaps, understood this problem more clearly than Marcel Proust whose great novel Remembrance of Things Past grows out of certain moments, which he called "Resurrections", of transparant unity of being...

"And at the moment when, recovering my balance, I put my foot on a stone which was slightly lower than its neighbours, all my discouragement vanished and in its place was that same happiness which at various epochs of my life had been given to me ... a profound azure intoxicated my eyes, impressions of coolness, of dazzling light..."

This, that is, from a sudden breaking free from the present and the recovery of the integrity of self beyond the fragmentation caused by passing time. Now what may be given by an apparently accidental experience, may also be achieved -- at least to a considerable extent -- by a spiritual effort. The effort called for is that of seeing things with the original simplicity of an ideal child, without adding any interpretations, without any fear. One can see easily, in others perhaps more easily than in oneself, the outline of the child remaining within the most sophisticated or even the most unpleasant, and so on, person. The introduction of Perceval as the first Grail hero indicated that the first condition of the Grail Quest is to return to that simplicity, and then from that standpoint to question the reality around ourselves.

This is one form, and stage, of the Quest; we shall consider next another which is represented by the person of Galahad.

Perceval



#222

INITIATION

Esoteric and Exoteric

"It is given unto you to know the mysteries . . . but to them it is not given."
—Matt. 13:11.



IN our subject text, we have the crux of initiatory process. Initiation is shown to be a matter wherein and whereby information of a serious and profound nature is communicated to a chosen group and withheld from others, presumably not qualified, at the time at least, to receive it.

2 Initiation is a process devised, as a result of practical experience, for the purpose of compelling those who, by profest desire for knowledge of a specific character have undertaken active steps toward its attainment, to prove their individual worthiness and

qualifications for it.

3 All along the Masonic pathway, the neofite is challenged again and again, sometimes seemingly with unnecessary frequency, but this is only apparently so. Is he worthy? Is he well qualified? Is he in possession of the necessary credentials? Has he made suitable proficiency in the understanding of that which already may have been entrusted to him? By what other rights does he expect to obtain the privilege he seeks, of advancement into an additional degree or measure of Light?

4 The answers to the questions propounded and the several challenges made seem, sometimes, absurdly simple, unless more than ordinary attention and thought is given them. This is a feature of the wonderful construction of the Masonic Work; that it does not require or utilize involved phraseology, and the most momentous factors of Truth, abstract and concrete, are expressible in the simplest etymology.

5 Ceremonial may or may not express any particular *new* truth. True initiation is ever and always a process that is operative *within the individual*. External ceremonial merely fixes the attention on certain principles, grafically exprest, at a certain time, place and under unusual circumstances, wherein a candidate makes a profession of his desires, his faith, his sincerity, his qualifications and his personal worth, in the presence of a group of chosen or privileged witnesses.

6 In ceremonial initiation, the candidate meets experiences he does not ordinarily expect, yet there is nothing that man can devise that will do more than form a stimulus thru which may be conveyed a strong impression that will be psychologically and psychically registered in the sub-conscious, which is the point it is usually desired to reach. Therefore, we do not ordinarily expect startling assertions or weird utterances in an initiatory ceremony of any real worth, and in this respect Masonry does not disappoint us.

7 Instead of startling or thrilling pronouncements and revelations, we discover, in true initiation, that very ordinary precepts, principles, dissertations and ethics, become quite extraordinary when given or repeated in a specialized manner, under circumstances calculated to give them an atmosphere that will cause the seed they enshrine to take root, expand and develop entirely new concepts in the mind of the listener who is, at the time, in a specially attentive mental status.

8 Ceremonial initiation can, at best, but bring home to a candidate, the truth in remarkable clarity, relating to a given subject. It does not necessarily give him *new* truth, but it shows him a *phase* of truth he supposed he already possessed in a new light, that usually develops in him a correspondingly new attitude and new works and activities as a direct result.

9 Such a form of ceremonial initiation will suffice for those whose minds are not yet ready to go further. The work performed by and for them, will have its results. It will register and the seed will take root, altho the plant and its blossom may not be evident until the period of mental gestation is completed. This particular length of time is dependent upon the individual temperament and the extent to which the neofite is crystallized into the ordinary concepts developed by traditional training, environment and educational systems.

10 Initiation is a weeding-out process, whereby those who are qualified to "know the mysteries" may be given the keys thereof, for giving the keys is all the Masonic initiation, passing or raising, ever does. Nowhere in the ritual does the Craft attempt to apply or to attach any phase of esoterism. The neofite must look for it himself. It is there and it is very obvious to whoso seeks it, and having the keys, the neofite has but to apply himself by the Light he has received according to degree, and the esoterism will be clearly revealed.

11 To some it is given to know the mysteries, but to others, it is not given. Not that there is any flavor of favoritism, but ever since mankind enshrined his philosophy in ritualistic mysticism, he has discovered that there are varying grades in life's school, and that which is appropriate to the graduate, is not, with discretion, available to the freshman. Therefore, initiation wisely acts as a weeding process, whereby those who, at present, are not entitled to be entrusted with arcane knowledge (which is TNT to the ignorant), are instructed how to prepare themselves for the reception of more important truth and principle. Those who *are* prepared, are invested with it.

12 The brother of the mystic tie who has participated in the several initiatory rites in the Craft and who sees in them only a ritualistic process of entering and affiliating with the Fraternity has missed the organic contact that is necessary for real advancement. There are hundreds who have become "Sublime Princes of the Royal Secret" who have not the faintest idea as to what the "Royal Secret" is or why they are sublime, or what makes them princes, and if so, princes of what?

13 While the particular title mentioned in the previous paragraph belongs to holders of the 32nd degree of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, it but expresses a status that was attained, if it was attained at all, early in the holder's Masonic career, i.e., when he became a Master Mason. Initiation, Passing and Raising have been frequently allocated to Youth, Manhood and Age, by Masonic orators, but we believe that such an allocation does not express the real truth involved.

14 The brother who becomes in fact and deed, not in word and ritual only, a true Master Mason, has already traveled in a foreign country and he has been made a citizen thereof. If he has learned his lesson well and made suitable proficiency entitling him to a stated advance, he has, in truth, been exalted to

the status of a prince of an invisible empire and that in itself constitutes a Royal Secret, for it can be shared only with those who have similarly traveled and been similarly exalted.

15 Initiation takes one out from the ordinary physical plane. The fact that the ordinary working tools of earth's craftsmen are used ethically but not physically, shows that they are assumedly being employed upon a different plane of consciousness. Passing, takes the neofite thru the median plane in the invisible world, while Raising, exalts him to the third and last attainable plane therein.

16 Initiation begins on the physical plane and is intended to lift the candidate's consciousness from that plane to the Etheric Plane. Passing carries (or passes) the candidate from the Etheric thru the Astral Plane where he finds the materials out of which his desires, impressions, wishes and passions in the physical world are developed. Raising, exalts the candidate from the illusion and delusion of the Astral World to the Thought World or Mental Plane, both Concrete and Abstract.

17 Our statements may occasion some surprise amongst brethren whose attention has not as yet been directed toward the esoteric side of Freemasonry and such brethren will be even more surprised when we state that the real esoteric purpose of the entire Lodge ritual is for the purpose of bringing about a rapprochement between the visible and invisible lodges.

18 In the opening and closing of the Lodge, the repetitive interlocutory work has a special significance. It is repeated over again every time the Lodge convenes. Why? Simply because in the questions and answers given at the time, the brethren *are actually building a lodge on the Astral Plane*. But nothing is permanent on that plane, therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct the actual Lodge by our verbal process each time the earthly Lodge convenes. Speech is two-fold. It is a fundamental Masonic requisite. The reason why it is such a requisite is clear. Speech expresses thought. Second, it concretizes the thought expressed. So, when we verbally declare what constitutes a Lodge, its furniture, features, officers and purpose, we actually construct on the Astral Plane, the verisimilitude of the earthly Lodge and it is thru this medium that the real mysteries are communicated to the *Faithful Breast* ready to receive them.

19 This being true, we can see how important it is, that sincerity should characterize every word uttered in the Masonic bodies. When the Opening Prayer is address to the Great Architect, that the Lodge may at this time "reflect that order and beauty which reign forever before His throne" we are assuming a tremendously serious responsibility, to which we should endeavor to live up to the very best of our ability. We are asking something more than superficial consideration ordinarily reveals.

20 Ceremonially, but factually, we have been taken, thru initiatory process, out from the material plane and taught our principles upon the Mental Plane, *but we did not know it at the time*. True Mastership means the ability to recover this process step by step *consciously*. We can truthfully claim to travel in foreign countries, work and receive master's wages only when we can do so *consciously* and *as an act of our own free will* and accord, upon the Mental Plane.

21 All legitimate schools of the mysteries teach that initiation is an interior process and Freemasonry faithfully adheres to the tradition and teaching, for while the *outward* ceremonial causes the candidate to focus his waking consciousness upon the lesson being inculcated, *its action is internal*, i.e., the realization of the process is solely upon the Mental Plane. The goal sought in all initiation is similar to that of the application or reception of a sacrament. A sacrament is defined as the outward visible symbol of an inward spiritual grace. Initiation is an outward ceremony indicating the attainment or the assumption of an inward exaltation and a personal experience of illuminism.

22 As an Entered Apprentice, the new brother enters in true Apprentice form upon the Etheric Plane, in which state he is presented the tools with which he must thereafter work. He is passed to the Astral Plane where he must demonstrate precision, in order to be accepted as a true Fellow-Craft amongst his fellow workmen. Perfecting himself, he is raised to the Mental Plane, and let us observe right here, that inside and outside the Fraternity, modern psychology has shown and is showing us with continuous revelation; how much of our most important work in this world is performed upon the Mental Plane of consciousness.

23 It is only when the Master in Masonry attains the Mental Plane or Thought World *consciously* that he is entitled to the appellation of "Master" in *fact* instead of *courtesy*. In the lower half of the Mental Plane, called the Region of Concrete Thought, is the *Archaeus* or cosmic storehouse, wherein will be found the archetypal models of all that pertains to human advancement in the various waves of evolution upon our planet.

24 This *archaeus* is the *real Masonic Trestle Board*, for here will be found the designs that have already been manifested for human progress and welfare and also other designs that will become manifest or brot into realization only when humanity shall have become entitled to them by developing the capacity to understand them and apply them. Here it is that the Master derives his ideas and studies the plans for human betterment which are to be developt thru the activities of those over whom he is appointed to govern.

25 The Upper Half of the Mental Plane is sometimes called the Region of Abstract Thought, and while the Master may study the designs on the Trestle Board of *archaeus*, he cannot vitalize them or give them life except thru an understanding of the laws that pertain to this higher mental region, for this is the home of the vital concept of Form, Life, Activity and the Desire-Emotional phase of Man. It was thus known to the ancients as *Hyle*.

26 These three "World Regions" are the planes of consciousness into which it is the purpose of the three Symbolic Degrees of Masonry to guide the candidate. The ceremonies of the Lodge room have nought to say regarding them. The officers merely award the keys and point the way, but the brother who has "taken his degrees" in the Blue Lodge soon realizes that, if he is to be a *working* Mason instead of a *theoretical* one, he must "carry on" from the new basis of departure furnisht by what he received from his Lodge. Of course, all true initiation depends entirely upon the spirit in which it is received or undertaken. Those who seek merely fraternalism have their reward and are usually content with it. Those who, by evolutionary status are receptive to higher concepts, find that initiation ceremonies merely awaken in them a response to the Spirit of Freemasonry, which we conceive to be a vital entity, always active in the Craft, seeking those who in turn are seeking the way to further Light than Physical ceremonial can convey.

27 Freemasonry is quite on equal footing with any church of past or present. This may be a new concept to the strictly orthodox denominational Masonic brother, but it is a fact nevertheless. Freemasonry is an institution devoted to the exposition of moral philosophy and a practical method of living that will enable the members to attain a definite spiritual status. This is exactly the mission of the Church. It has been the mission of every root or world religion ancient or medieval. Freemasonry claims no divine lineage but there is more of Divinity in its essential fabric than its members may suppose. Freemasonry inculcates a moral law. So does the Church. Freemasonry operates thru a system of degrees and initiatory ceremonials. So does, or rather so did the Church, for the Christian Church was originally a secret organization of five degrees, with appropriate pass words, tokens and signs. Freemasonry works in a ritualistic manner. So does the Church, Catholic or Protestant, for all service is ritual with differing degrees of symbolic embellishments.

28 A person is made a Mason thru ceremonial initiation. A person becomes a member of the Church thru a ceremonial initiation, whether it be Confirmation or Reception into Fellowship. The whole Solar System operates thru ritual, for ritual is nothing more or less than an orderly, systematic manner

of functioning, that ensures uniformity of thought and purpose and the exclusion of all other thoughts and extraneous matters.

29 The foregoing observations were made because they serve as an introduction to the statement that initiation into the Masonic Order is an interior as well as an exterior process. While the physical body of the candidate conforms to the outward functions, the Ego is exalted to the Mental Plane, unconsciously at the time, but given the clues that will enable the brother, if he seeks the door thereto, to enter the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the higher world regions at will, as a free and accepted Ego; free, because no longer limited to the physical body; accepted because by his presence on the higher planes of being, he has proved his worthiness to be accepted as a Master Builder in the Spiritual Temple.

30 We have called attention to the fact that with every opening of the Lodge we erect an astral counterpart of the Lodge in the inner worlds, that serves temporarily the purpose of the complete initiation. This permits the co-operation of the two classes of brethren, the visible and the invisible. While the visible brethren are engaged in conducting the initiation of the candidate in the earthly visible Lodge room, the invisible brethren are engaged in co-operating by conducting a similar initiation of the same candidate but on the Mental Plane in the Astral Lodge just erected.

31 Like all legitimate schools of the mysteries, Freemasonry operates under the aegis of a distinct Ray from the Logos, the color of the Ray being Light Blue, sometimes slightly yellowish. This is the symbolic color of the planet Venus, which, in astroscience, signifies that order, symmetry, beauty and proportion upon which so many of the cardinal principles of Masonry are founded. It is thru this Ray that Freemasonry penetrates into the inner spheres of being and furnishes, to those who seek it, a direct contact with the higher functions of spiritual cognition and consciousness.

32 Masonic initiation is most subtle in its functions. The Candidate is caused to respond to certain ceremonial procedure, but this procedure is of a type that stimulates thru the mental faculties, an increase in activity in certain "centers" in the bodily organism, called by some the "psychic centers" and by others the "*chakras*" or Lotos buds. Ordinary initiation does not wholly awaken them, only a well defined system of developmental work can do that, but it does stimulate them to a greater degree of activity than they normally exhibit. This increase in activity serves to quicken the spiritual faculties of the neofite, so that, if he is at a point in evolutionary status to receive the mysteries, a desire for them will be awakened within him and his response to the Spirit of Freemasonry and its entity-genius will be so strong as to cause the ceremonial work of the Lodge to become but the beginning of a more extended search and a wider field of activity.

33 In Masonic initiation the keys given are most numerous. Freemasonry does not stint its sons. It gives generously. While the Church has always typified the feminine aspect of Divinity, being called the "Bride of Christ" and by other feminine names, Freemasonry represents the masculine nature and character of Divinity, and in this aspect of Fatherhood, the Fraternity provides most generously for all its children. This is well known so far as the material plane is concerned but we are interested here with the esoteric or spiritual side alone. Esoterically, it is due to its characterization of the masculine aspect of Deity that Freemasonry confines its membership solely to men.

34 If the newly initiated brother will take any one of the Masonic Principles that have been ceremonially placed before his consideration and use it as a focus for concentration and deep meditation, it will serve to open up to his inner vision a wealth of spiritual truth he has not heretofore experienced or even suspected. The Fraternity has wisely left its various definitions in such a status that the enquiring mind can readily carry them farther, allowing free play for individual original thought. In this fact the candidate or rather, the neofite (new plant), has his opportunity, for by meditation and concentration he can take a given symbol and carry it on thru mental analysis followed by synthesis in a way that will develop a wealth of thought and elevate his mind to a truly spiritual plane of vantage at the same time.

35 The Masonic brother who will faithfully follow this suggested procedure with all the symbols of Masonry, taken in their proper turn and place, will find that his real initiation *was* on a mental plane and that such deep delving therein is only bringing out what he least suspected he had within himself. It will prove a true test of the extent to which his initiation has really extended.

36 There is nothing magical or bizarre about this concept of the double nature of Masonic initiation. It is simply another way of stating a truth we all know to be operative in every day life. Day after day, we go about our affairs with little seeming attention to details that do not concern us. But let some mental shock, twist or psychological phenomenon occur and we are amazed to note that sub-consciously (as we say), we have been registering impressions and visual images of things to which we gave no active attention at all, and of which, ordinarily, we would have claimed entire ignorance.

37 The same phenomenon occurs in initiatory ceremonies that have a substantial background of reality and vital truth to justify them. The body and the waking senses or normal consciousness may respond as usual to external stimuli, but the inner spiritual senses are registering impressions received upon and from a plane of consciousness higher than the physical, altho we may not be conscious of it at the time. The psychical centers with us, which have been referred to, have received new impetus and the energization developing from the new impetus makes active our powers of visualization and intuition to a marked degree if we will but give our earnest attention to them.

38 While we are incarnate as human beings, we have no right to discount or belittle any of the physical processes. There are cults that indulge in extravagant claims to superhuman and supernormal developments. There can be nothing of the sort. We cannot be more than human or normal, try as best we may. Few of us are completely normal and few of us are wholly human. There are too many hold-overs or atavisms of animalism still observable about us.

39 So we may regard with suspicion claims to a spiritual development or cognition that takes an attitude of condescension toward the physical environment for every step we make in spiritual process or development must have its basis in some sort of physical fact. Spiritual development or true initiation is both physiological, psychological and psychical. If we attain a spiritual unfoldment due to "stepping up" our individual vibratory status, that vibratory status functions in a physiological way on a physical plane but the results manifest as a psychological and psychical phenomena of some sort.

40 If we attain a higher spiritual status, it is due to a "stepping up" of our psychical natures, with a psychological basis which, in turn, is developed on the solid foundation of physiological activity. All development is a function of the individual cells and without taking them into consideration in our unfoldment processes, all initiatory work is in vain.

41 In conferring ceremonial initiation Freemasonry, therefore, wisely begins with the physical plane, well knowing that the Spirit of Freemasonry Itself will take care of the inner processes involved. The Craft gives to its neofites, keys in plenty, when the neofite has demonstrated that he is worthy and well qualified. But it does not give him Further Light until the neofite has put himself in a proper position to receive it, which proper position is upon the psycho-spiritual plane. When he attains this plane of consciousness, he is prompted from within to seek further, realizing inwardly that something still remains of which the outward ceremonial is merely the shadow.

42 The factual evidence of the observations developed in this lesson is found in the ever and rapidly increasing number of thoughtful Masons who are interested in Masonic Research. By Masonic Research we do not mean to imply the resurrecting of dusty archives, historic manuscripts, ancient Charges, eminent craftsmen and similar data. These activities are most valuable for the preservation to the wisdom of future generations of a complete knowledge of the exoteric aspects of the Craft. But such matters are exoteric only, and they do not satisfy the yearnings of those to whom the true nature of their individual initiatory experiences has become apparent.

43 Such brethren as we have just referred to have heard vaguely of "Masonic Secrets" and they are determined to find out what those secrets are and in the beginning of their search they have discovered that the secrets are not those of ancient archives nor upon the physical or even the intellectual plane of consciousness but pertain solely to the realm of spirit. To the truly initiated Mason, the staircase that leads from the Ground Floor to the Middle Chamber is but Jacob's Ladder leading from the Ground Floor of earth to the Middle Chamber of the lower heaven worlds or planes of inner spiritual consciousness and the angels ascending and descending are those initiates who are seeking to rise, and the celestial Brethren who descend to earth to help the seekers.

44 To the truly initiated Brother, the sprig of acacia is not alone a symbol of immortality, it symbolizes the famed mythological Tree Ygdrasil, whose branches bind together hell, earth and heaven and from which all humanity derives nourishment. On top of its branches sits the Eagle (of the A.A.S.R.), between whose eyes sits Vedfolner, the hawk (of ancient Egypt). In ancient mythos, "the roots go down into the three great realms (1) of death, where, in the well Hvergelmer, the dragon Nidhug and his brood are ever gnawing at it: (2) of the giants, where, in the fountain of Mimer, is the source of wisdom: (3) of the gods, Asgaard, where, at the sacred fountain of Urd, is the divine tribunal, and the dwelling of the Fates."

45 In the three regions penetrated by the roots and branches of Ygdrasil, it is easy to see the correspondence with the three degrees of Masonic Initiation, the Entered Apprentice where the world is over operative to swerve the neofite from his newly assumed responsibilities; the Fellow-Craft wherein he learns wisdom, and the Master Mason, wherein and whereby the initiate, as one of the gods in creative ability, becomes the Master Builder and Workman.

46 Contrary to popular opinion, Freemasonry does not stand or fall with the legend of King Solomon's Temple. It is far more substantial and enduring than that, for the myth of the famous Temple is not supported by the facts of history or archeology. The attainment therefore, of a place representing the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of King Solomon's Temple is only an allegory of the real initiation which is the attainment of and raising into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Inner, Invisible Temple on the spiritual planes. This Temple on the invisible planes is a very real structure altho not apparent to physical sight. Nevertheless, those who understand what is meant by the cosmic consciousness* will readily understand how it is possible for mortal man to function in a Temple served by spiritual entities.

47 Initiation is so almost identical with regeneration as to mean practically the same thing. In initiation, the candidate, as heretofore stated, does not receive essentially *new* truths, so much as he receives a clearer view and a more complete and comprehensive understanding of *known* truths. When he assumes his Masonic Obligations, he does not assume anything essentially new. On examination, it will be found that all that is embodied in the Obligation is no more or less than what would normally be expected of a decent, thoughtful, progressive, enlightened man and citizen.

48 But we grow careless, thoughtless and indifferent as we rub against the world and friction wears down the keenness of our better natures. The candidate for church membership in the process of confirmation, renews and ratifies his baptismal pledges and is confirmed in this renewal. The candidate for the mysteries, in assuming his Obligation, renews his principles of manhood and citizenship and is sealed in that renewal by the witness he invokes in the presence of earthly witnesses.

49 Renewal is a form of regeneration. Initiation provides for this process of renewal, therefore initiation is essentially and fundamentally regenerative in its action and its effect upon the individual. With the renewal effected, the candidate for advancement is given a new lease as it were. He has assumed a definite scheme of life which, if faithfully lived up to, will unfailingly have

* Cosmic Consciousness. Bucke.

its effect upon him, manifesting thru his external attitude toward all mankind but especially with the brethren.

50 In the regenerative and initiatory process of Freemasonry, the glyphs of the Craft make a powerful appeal to the individual conscience and inner moral nature of the neofite. We say inner moral nature advisedly, for it is the inner morality that counts, not the external veneer that we often fail to realize is *but* a veneer. Crises in life bring out the truth of this statement, and in such crises it is the inner, inherent nature that comes to the front and reveals the real man within.

51 Real initiation teaches one lesson that is paramount. It is the lesson of toleration. True, we often discover those amongst our fellow craftsmen who are *not* tolerant but that is not the fault of the Fraternity. In every instance, toleration is taught as a cardinal principle, a Masonic virtue, whereby each brother is led to see that each man's conscience is his own guide and that it is not within the power of man to superimpose his ideas upon another or upon others, with any reasonable expectation of seeing good results accrue therefrom.

52 Intolerance has been the curse of the ages. It has been the cause of more warfare and shedding of innocent blood than any other single cause, as will be found on examination, for intolerance is one of the basic principles of greed and selfishness. Tolerance of the ideas of others, especially their religious ideas, is a virtue that should be cultivated far more widely than it has been, and doubtless there will never be a time in human history when intolerance will not be a foe to be reckoned with, for as we advance, we carry over, tho perhaps in higher form, the same atavistic tendencies.

53 Real initiation is a mental vacuum cleaner. The man who enters into the process in the right state of mind should emerge therefrom with his mental impurities cleared away. He faces the world with a clean slate, ready for a new and better record. The neofite who is truly initiated will have replaced an attitude of intolerance with one of widest toleration. He will replace sentiments of race or religious prejudice with those of acceptance in the light of true brotherhood, and the certainty that all races unite under one common Fatherhood. He will realize that *brotherhood* is *not* a *platitute* but an *organic reality*. He will understand that the terms "free" and "accepted" are but synonyms for "liberty" and "equality" in the sense of a sharing of opportunity and responsibility and moral accountability.

54 The man who has received initiation in the grades of Freemasonry has passed thru the most searching and critical examinations of conscience and conduct it is possible for man to apply to his fellow man. Therefore, the world has a right to expect much from the Masonic initiate, for he has assumed much. He has not assumed anything that was not previously to be expected of him, but in his renewal and regeneration, he has *consciously assumed* that which was ethically expected of him, therefore, as a "child of Light" his regeneration is to become manifest as an exemplification of Masonic Principle and Conduct in the external world.

55 Assuming the requisite evolutionary status, the Masonic initiate is in a fair way to progress on the Path that leads to cosmic consciousness, if he eschews the pitfalls of politics and cliques and keeps to the straight and narrow way of true Masonic Principle. He cannot fail to make that progress, for over the same Path have trodden those who, having gone that way before us, have entered into Light.
